

In the Claims:

Please enter the following amended claim 1:

1. (Twice Amended) A semiconductor workpiece, comprising:

a metal layer;

an inorganic dielectric ARC layer disposed on the metal layer, wherein said inorganic dielectric ARC layer functions as a hard mask, and wherein said inorganic dielectric ARC layer has a substantially uniform thickness over topical non-planarities on the metal layer; and

a photoresist layer disposed on the ARC layer opposite the metal layer.

Please cancel claim 4.

Please enter the following amended claim 9:

9. (Twice Amended) A metallic stack for a semiconductor interconnect, comprising:

a metal layer;

an inorganic dielectric ARC layer disposed on the metal layer, wherein said inorganic dielectric ARC layer functions as a hard mask, and wherein said inorganic dielectric ARC layer has a substantially uniform thickness over topical non-planarities on the metal layer; and

a barrier layer disposed on the metal layer opposite the ARC layer.

Please cancel claim 12.

Please enter the following amended claim 17:

17. (Once Amended) A semiconductor device, comprising:
an oxide layer formed on a wafer; and
at least one microelectronic structure extending from the oxide layer and including:
a barrier layer disposed on the oxide layer;
a metal layer disposed on the barrier layer;
an inorganic dielectric ARC layer disposed on the metal layer,
wherein said inorganic dielectric ARC layer functions as a hard mask; and
a residual photoresist layer disposed on said inorganic dielectric ARC layer.

Please cancel claim 18.